

## **March 06**

As the clock ticks down to the Cheltenham Festival there's just time to squeeze in another newsletter to keep subscribers and "potentials" abreast of developments, both with Jump For Fun and the stable generally. Since the last update there's been quite a lot of interest, not to mention excitement, to report and with the Club now into its 5th month there's also much to look forward to as the season heads towards the traditional Spring festivals. Talking of which .....

## **Cheltenham Rest & Relaxation**

Those of you who are Festival regulars or who are planning to attend on the Thursday will be comforted to learn that the stable has a hospitality area in the tented village. Owners are welcome to seek respite from the baying mob outside by seeking out the chalet in Marquee M1 located below the paddock area. Here there's a pay bar facility and the chance to sit and have some refreshment and a rest before returning to the fray. All are welcome so if you're going to be at Cheltenham please feel free to call in. Stay as long as you like and hopefully catch up with some other JFF members at the same time. I'll be popping in and out I look forward to seeing some of you there.

## **Stable Visit**

We held our second stable visit on February 24th following which most people moved on to Warwick for an enjoyable, if rather uninspiring, afternoon's racing. The weather, both on the gallops and at Warwick, was verging on the Siberian but boosted by the usual gargantuan breakfast at The Hollow Bottom everyone lived to tell the tale.

Frustratingly for members and organisers alike we still only had Ballyshan as the object of JFF devotion and attendees were updated on the continuing search for the 2nd horse once breakfast had been demolished. More details on this front later in the newsletter. It was good to be able to say hello to Tony and Pat Few from Andover and Dennis Burrige who'd made the long trip from Paignton. Also Christine Walker from Worcester came to find out more about Jump For Fun and seemingly not even the obstacle of having me as a breakfast companion was sufficient deterrent as she's subsequently signed up. Or, to be more precise, she's "benefited" from the ultimate birthday present, a year's JFF subscription courtesy of husband Mark!

Ballyshan again looked and worked well, sufficiently so to keep a Cheltenham entry as a realistic proposition. Again, more news regarding this later on.

A word of commiseration here for Dennis Burrige and his 2 Devonian travelling companions who became "non runners" for Warwick somewhere between The Hollow Bottom and the course when their car broke down. Apparently they had to be transported back to the West Country on a low-loader, eventually arriving back in Paignton towards the end of the day. With temperatures being what they were I don't suppose there was too much jumping for fun by Dennis and his chums while they were waiting for the recovery people.

This apart, a quick resume over coffee after gallops by Nigel of his outline Cheltenham running plans may prove to be informative. To me, at least, there appeared to be an inference that Tramantano in the Coral Cup on the Wednesday (Ballyshan an entry but highly unlikely to run) was not without a chance. But as we all know, no Cheltenham race comes easy.

## N T-D Nearing the Thousand

I'm indebted to long-standing stable patron and very sad person, Geoffrey Keeys, for the following statistics which plot the annual success rate since Nigel took out a licence to train and which show that he's rapidly closing in on 1,000 winners, a figure he should reach sometime before the year end.

1981/2 - 2	1989/0 - 8	1997/8 - 69
1982/3 - 0	1990/1 - 19	1998/9 - 65
1983/4 - 0	1991/2 - 31	1999/0 - 87
1984/5 - 4	1992/3 - 76	2000/1 - 47
1985/6 - 4	1993/4 - 72	2001/2 - 35
1986/7 - 1	1994/5 - 81	2002/3 - 31
1987/8 - 3	1995/6 - 74	2003/4 - 79
1988/9 - 2	1996/7 - 52	2004/5 - 69

Readers will instantly be able to judge the extent of my keyboard skills but this apart you might want to make a mental note that there could be a bit of a party sometime over the coming months, maybe even at Nigel's "At Home" for owners in July. Either way it's some achievement and will also undoubtedly be some party, the more so for JFF members if we can help add to the tally. Looking ahead to the summer gathering we're likely to have a couple of tables at the annual Owners gathering but more of this anon once the date and other details have been finalised.

## Club Horse(s)

They say that patience is a virtue and all I can say, therefore, is that Jump For Fun Racing is a pretty virtuous collection of individuals. The search for our second horse seems to have been going on for ages, but in truth it's only been a few weeks. Nonetheless it's been a frustrating time as we've attempted to solve the conundrum of evaluating likely ability vs perceived value before committing your hard earned cash on a stable mate for Ballyshan. Well, the wait now looks like being over, but before I update you on the likely new Club addition it's best to bring you the latest news on the star of the show and JFF standard bearer, Ballyshan.

You'll be aware by now that "Sean's" latest race resulted in another 2nd, this time at Market Rasen. Given that he was sent off a solid 8/13 chance the fact that he was beaten was undoubtedly something of a disappointment, but this was tempered by a further placing and the addition of more prize money to members' funds. In five races since the Club was formed Ballyshan has won once, been second three times and third once so he's always been in the frame and has picked up £7,153 of prize money in the process.

Although Nigel wasn't present he reviewed the race on video later and is of the view that Antony made a bit too much use of the horse. This may well be valid, but in Antony's defence he knew in the paddock beforehand that nobody wanted to make the pace and he was, therefore, on something of a hiding to nothing. Ballyshan was also carrying at least 7lb more than any other runner and attempted to do this the hard way by making all.



His jumping's getting better!



A well-earned post-race drink.

Well, as we know, he got collared at the second last but had jumped adequately most of the way and was simply out-stayed close home by a mare who could turn out to be quite useful. There were 10 supporters on hand to cheer Sean on and apart from the Butlers, Jessemeys (thanks for the photo's Jan) and Telfords it was good to meet Pete Simmons for the first time. Mind you, living in Bourne, Market Rasen is almost on his doorstep! The end result of all this leaves us with the classic dilemma as far as Cheltenham is concerned. Take up the Friday entry in the hugely competitive 3m Brit Ins Novices Hurdle in which, on all known form, he would have to improve significantly to stand any chance of making the frame, of miss Cheltenham and aim for something lower key but more realistic? The latest view (as at Weds March 8th) is that it's still up in the air. Having spoken to the trainer I'm able to report that Ballyshan continues to please on the gallops but much will depend on the weather, the final running plans of some of the other entries and whether Sean's handicap mark is sufficient for him to survive any ballot. The fact that there are so many Irish entries makes this difficult to assess on its own. So we're going to declare at the 5 day stage and then take a view. Please contact me if you have strong views one way or the other as these will obviously have an influence on the final decision. Should we opt for the Cheltenham route then I'll be in touch by 'phone early next week to determine requirements for owners' badges. This in its own right could well be tricky as there's every chance that we'll be over subscribed. However, for the moment I don't intend to worry on this score although it would be handy if I knew how many intend to be at Cheltenham on the Friday if Ballyshan runs and whether you are already a Cheltenham member for admission purposes. Please either email me ([bsims@jumpforfunracing.co.uk](mailto:bsims@jumpforfunracing.co.uk)) or telephone if you're planning on being there on Friday which is Gold Cup Day and officially already a sell out. Ultimately I'll do my best to keep everybody happy but I've a feeling that this is going to be easier said than done.

On to our next (planned) addition. This somewhat tortuous path has now led us to a 4YO son of Supreme Leader out of Gain Control by Mandalus and all being well we'll be able to conclude a deal by the end of Cheltenham week.

Some of you may be aware that the previous object of our attentions was a 5YO by Garde Royal named Royal Kicks who'd run 3rd in a pretty competitive Irish point just before Christmas.

Unfortunately, but perhaps unsurprisingly, a couple of horses who finished behind Royal Kicks in that point have subsequently been placed in bumpers in Ireland and the asking price (which we were haggling over in the first place) has now gone up by £10K! On the current membership level this is simply unaffordable so Royal Kicks is no longer an option.

My colleague, Ian Robinson, has been to Ireland and seen the Supreme Leader gelding and both he and Kevin Ross, our bloodstock agent, are happy with the horse. He's totally unraced but pretty forward in terms of fitness and the intention would be to ship him here by the month end and hopefully look at a racecourse introduction in an English bumper in the Spring. This dependent on our having the money to conclude the deal, because realistically we need another 3-5 members to fund the purchase. However, with a further 40,000 JFF brochures to be mailed out imminently with the Cheltenham Festival Magazine we're hoping that additional promotion will bring the extra subscriptions.

One of two existing members have suggested payment of an extra £200 per head simply to fund the 2nd purchase but this isn't a feasible option as administratively it's impractical to have different subscription levels amongst members. I'll keep you informed, but money notwithstanding, we've got our horse and all we need now is for somebody with a modicum of intelligence to christen him. In my experience this is invariably the hardest part of the task, but a photo of the gelding and his pedigree (3 dams) is attached to help inspire.



	Busted
	Bustino
	Ship Yard
Sire:: Supreme Leader (Bay 1982)	Habitat
	Princess Zena
	Guiding Light
(Bay Gelding 2002)	Mandamus
	Mandalus
	Laminate
Dam:: Gain Control (JRE)(Brown 1989)	Wolver Hollow
	Where Is It
	Hunting Cap

## **Stable Overview**

The current total of winners is 55 (as at March 8th) with table prize money running at £442K, a figure which puts the Twiston-Davies team 10th in the trainers' table.

Although the overall form of the yard continues to be somewhat erratic the winners are still coming and there are grounds for thinking that the low grade infection that's undoubtedly affected some runners could now be on the retreat.

With regard to Cheltenham, entries abound and at this juncture it would seem likely that there will be a Twiston-Davies runner in the majority of the 24 races over the four days. For full details of entries and updated running plans please refer to the website. Cheltenham, however, is not of paramount importance. There are plenty of good races to be won elsewhere and a good chunk of the season left to achieve this, so let's not get overly obsessed with 4 days in March in the Cotswolds, alluring as it is.

That's about it for the moment. Hoping to see as many of you as possible over the course of the next week or so, but I'll be in touch regardless with updated news as it breaks.

Regards meanwhile.

## **BOB SIMS**

**H:** 01442 842955

**M:** 07871 571054